

## Correctional Programs

In addition to meeting offenders' basic needs, CSC must also assist them in addressing the underlying causes of their criminal behaviour. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure the safety of both the offender and the public by reducing the recidivism risk. CSC programs target the attitudes and beliefs that led to the offender's criminal activity. Programs are research-based and use cognitive-behavioural techniques. Each program has clear objectives, criteria for the selection of participants, a process for evaluating participants' progress, and a quality control system for monitoring effectiveness. Program areas include:

- education/literacy;
- living skills (including transition to the community);
- violence prevention;
- substance abuse intervention;
- treatment of sexual offenders;
- issues specific to Aboriginal offenders;
- issues specific to women offenders;
- issues specific to Aboriginal women offenders;
- treatment of mental health;
- employment;
- ethnocultural issues;
- the safe reintegration of offenders serving a life sentence.

## 1. Education

The most common need of offenders is education. About 53% of new offenders test at or below a Grade 10 level in mathematics and language. This means that literacy is an immediate priority. Without basic literacy skills, offenders will not be able to fully participate in correctional programs, nor will they be able to function well in society upon release. About 21% of offenders have learning difficulties, compared to 5–10% of the general population. Multi-level education programs are available at all minimum-, medium- and maximum-security institutions.

**Adult basic education:** Covers Grades 1 to 12 and leads to a high school diploma. Inmates are well aware that a secondary school diploma has become prerequisite for securing employment and for entry into a variety of training opportunities.

**Vocational programs:** Include welding and metal trades, hairdressing, small engine repair, auto mechanics and auto body repair, electronics, carpentry and cabinet making, upholstery, plumbing, cooking, and computer programming.

**Post-secondary education:** Offers offenders the opportunity to learn a profession, as well as update their trade qualifications. Offenders generally pay for their own post-secondary education, unless it can be demonstrated that the program addresses a specific criminogenic need.

### Education programs

**Objectives:** The primary objective of the education and employment programs is to provide offenders with provincially accredited/certified programs that meet their identified educational needs and to assist them in reintegrating into the community as law-abiding citizens.

**Clientele:** The offender's functional grade or achievement level is established upon entering the corrections system. This is done using a national standardized measure. When an offender's achievement grade is determined to be below Grade 10 or equivalent or when skills upgrading is required for participation in vocational or CORCAN programs, the offender's education program ranks as a priority on the correctional plan.

**Research:** A 1998 research report concluded that specific intellectual skills gained through Adult Basic Education (ABE) equip offenders to deal more effectively with daily problems encountered in the community.

**Duration:** All education programs are available on a twelve-month basis. Courses are available on a full-time or part-time basis, on site or by correspondence. All institutional programs are available on a 12-month basis. These programs are either provincially accredited or certified and meet the needs of offenders and objectives of correctional programming.

## 2. Living Skills

Apart from requiring basic education, most offenders need to address the skill deficits that are related to their criminal behaviour. The *Living Skills* menu of programs consists of several components, each of which addresses particular needs of offenders. These programs are available throughout the incarceration period and during the period offenders are on conditional release in the community. The program consists of *Reasoning and Rehabilitation, Anger and Emotions Management (and their Booster or follow-up programs), Community Integration, Leisure Skills and Parenting Skills Training.*

### Reasoning and rehabilitation and the cognitive skills booster

**Objectives:** This core component of *Living Skills Program* focuses on the development of interpersonal and reasoning skills for effective life management.

**Clientele:** Offenders are referred to the program, usually at intake, based on an assessment of deficits in the following areas: self-control, interpersonal problem solving, cognitive style, social perspective taking, values, and critical reasoning. Intake screening, accomplished through interviews and a standardized assessment battery, indicates that 77% of the offender population has cognitive deficits.

**Research:** The *Reasoning and Rehabilitation Program* and its *Booster or Maintenance Program* were accredited in April 1998 by an international expert panel. The design of the skills training program was based on a review of the literature demonstrating that higher risk or repeat offenders share characteristic cognitive deficits. The program addresses these deficits through a variety of skills building approaches. Extensive research studies and pilots conducted by CSC indicate the program has a positive impact upon recidivism.

**Duration:** The *Reasoning and Rehabilitation Program* consists of 37 two-hour group sessions. The program can be delivered between 2 and 5 times a week to groups consisting of between 4 and 10 participants. Program delivery requires a qualified Program Delivery Officer (PDO). The *Boosting Cognitive Skills Program* is designed to assist participants in reviewing and maintaining the use of skills taught in the *Cognitive Skills Training Program.*

### Community integration

**Objectives:** The *Community Integration Program* is a pre-release (or early post-release) component of programming. It addresses the offenders' need for current information relevant to their transition from incarceration to the community.

**Clientele:** The *Community Integration Program* is targeted specifically at offenders who are approaching their day parole, full parole, statutory release or warrant expiry release dates. Ideally, it should be delivered within six months of the expected release date. Offenders are recommended to the program based on their Offender Intake Assessment pointing to difficulty in the community function domain.

**Research:** The *Community Integration Program* is not a skills-based program. Instead, it assists offenders in their transition to the community by providing them with the basic information to allow them to take more responsibility for planning their reintegration. It targets offenders who have particular difficulty adjusting to the community after serving a prison sentence. The program addresses problems that offenders typically experience in their transition, such as difficulties in managing money, maintaining stable accommodation, planning a strategy to look for employment, and accessing community resources.

**Duration:** Referral agents recommend offenders to the *Community Integration Program* based on specific need areas. This may result in offenders participating in all modules or only those modules identified on the referral form. The number of sessions in the program varies from 10 to 20. Each group session is no longer than two and a half hours in length. The maximum number of participants varies for each module of this program; some are size-specific while others are

open-ended. The program may also be delivered on a one-to-one basis.

### Leisure skills

**Objectives:** The program targets offenders who are involved in leisure activities that are related to antisocial or other behavioural problems (e.g., substance abuse, compulsive gambling, and membership in antisocial gangs). This program can serve as a useful adjunct to treatment programs that specifically target such behaviours.

**Clientele:** The *Leisure Skills Program* is designed for offenders who have a criminal history related to their inappropriate use of leisure time and/or whose current leisure pursuits are not conducive to coping or adapting, either inside the institution or in the community.

**Research:** Research comparing recidivists with non-recidivists found that generally, the former spend much more time in casual, unstructured activities such as “hanging out” with friends. The program is designed to help offenders better structure their time during incarceration and develop new, pro-social interests that they can pursue when released.

**Duration:** The *Leisure Skills Program* consists of 11 two-hour sessions (10 group sessions and one individual session). As well, the offenders plan a group activity that takes place at the end of the program.

## Parenting skills

**Objectives:** The *Parenting Skills Program* was designed to help offenders develop and improve the skills they need to relate to their families successfully. The program is intended to foster and support women and men offenders who show a commitment to developing or improving a healthy family relationship while incarcerated, and upon release. Offenders attending the program are encouraged to invite their partners.

**Clientele:** Selection criteria for this component target offenders who have a history of parenting problems. These inmates often have inadequate knowledge of raising children, an inability to cope and communicate effectively, unrealistic expectations and inappropriate methods of discipline. Participants of the *Family Violence Prevention Programs* must also attend this program.

**Research:** The *Parenting Skills Program* targets criminal recidivism in two ways. First, there are indications that positive family ties reduce the risk for criminal behaviour in the adult criminal population. Second, providing parenting skills to offenders while they are under supervision hopefully enhances their motivation for improvement and ability to access and sustain involvement with appropriate community support/intervention for parenting problems. This support may help increase their chances of successful reintegration as well as provide potential gains in preventing the cycle of criminal behaviour in high-risk/criminal lifestyle-oriented individuals.

**Duration:** The *Parenting Skills Program* consists of 18 group sessions and two workshops. Each session is approximately two and a half hours in length, depending on the interest level of the group. The program may be delivered two to five times a week. It is facilitated by certified Living Skills coaches trained in the *Parenting Skills Program*.

## 3. Violence Prevention

### Family violence prevention programs

**Objectives:** The emphasis on these programs is to eliminate violence and abuse toward female partners. They are based on a social learning model that conceptualizes violence against women as a learned pattern of behaviour that can be modified.

**Clientele:** A *High-Intensity Family Violence Prevention Program* (HIFVPP) is available for individuals who scored a high-risk rating on the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment (SARA) and have a documented history of two or more incidents of violence against female partners. A medium intensity program (MIFVPP) serves those with a moderate-risk rating on the SARA and a documented history of one incident of violence against a female partner.

**Research:** The programs include a detailed evaluation process that will permit the assessment of their success. Preliminary results are promising. They have indicated significant results in attitudes and skill among program participants in both the moderate and high intensity pilot program. The *National Family Violence Program* was accredited by an international expert panel in March 2001.

**Duration:** The MIFVPP consists of twenty-four two and a half hour group sessions delivered two to five times a week over a period of five to 13 weeks. There are also three individual counseling sessions and a monthly institutional maintenance program. The HIFVPP consists of 75 two and a half hour group sessions delivered over a period of 15 weeks. There are also eight to 10 individual counseling sessions and a monthly institutional maintenance program. Two facilitators (one male and one female) deliver the programs.

### Anger and other emotions management (plus booster)

**Objectives:** This program takes a cognitive-behavioural approach to anger reduction. It trains offenders in skills needed to manage anger and other emotions associated with impulsive aggression and antisocial behaviour.

**Clientele:** Moderate risk offenders who have a history of impulsive and hostile aggression, cope poorly with stress, have low frustration tolerance or have poor conflict resolution skills are referred to the program. As well, the program benefits those for whom the management of other emotions/conditions such as anxiety and depression has impaired their potential to become pro-social.

**Research:** *Anger and Other Emotions Management Program* was accredited in April 1998 by an international expert panel. An evaluation conducted in 1999 demonstrated a strong reduction in general recidivism among participants.

**Duration:** The program consists of 26 group and two individual sessions that can be delivered two to five times per week. The program is delivered by certified Living Skills coaches trained in the *Anger and Emotion Management Program*. Recognizing the need for continuous practice and

long-term follow-up, the program has been supplemented by a booster program that helps graduates of the program to apply their skills.

### Violence prevention

**Objectives:** The *Violence Prevention Program* is an intensive cognitive-behavioural reintegration program for federal offenders. By improving the interpersonal and pro-social skills of the participants, this program aims to reduce the risk of future violence.

**Clientele:** The *Violence Prevention Program* is intended to help offenders who have already committed at least two violent offences and who are considered at high risk to commit violent crimes (based on the Statistical Information on Recidivism Scale [SIR]). A standardized assessment battery identifies those who would benefit from this program.

**Research:** Aggression and violent behavioural problems are multidimensional. Based on a cognitive-behavioural model of human behaviour, the program's main premise is that violent behaviours are learned through the mediums of modeling, reinforcement and cognitive mediation. Preliminary outcome data are encouraging but require long-term evaluation against matched control groups. An international expert panel accredited the program in June 2000.

**Duration:** The program consists of 94 two-hour group sessions and four individual sessions. The program (excluding individual sessions) is delivered in 14 weeks. Each group comprises a maximum of 12 participants. Program delivery requires a qualified program delivery officer and a psychologist.

### Counter-point

**Objectives:** The *Counter-Point Program* was developed based on current theory and research that pointed to factors consistently identified as appropriate targets for intervention with criminal populations. They include: changing antisocial attitudes and feelings; reducing antisocial peer associations; promoting identification with anti-criminal role models; increasing self-control and problem solving skills; and replacing antisocial skills with pro-social skills.

**Clientele:** Referral criteria for the program include: extensive criminal history, medium-to-high score on a standardized risk/needs assessment, negative attitudes and expressions, deficits in self-management and self-control of behaviour and feelings, impulsivity, and unwillingness to seek employment or upgrade education.

**Research:** The *Counter-Point Program* integrates a variety of approaches consistent with the Effective Corrections literature. The program's underlying philosophy is derived from social learning theory. Consistent with this theoretical model, cognitive-behavioural strategies are introduced to provide the offender with the tools for change. The emphasis is on challenging and restructuring the thinking patterns that enable offenders to act out crimes (i.e., offenders neutralize or rationalize their behaviour and basically "give themselves permission" to do what they want). The program's strategy emphasizes motivation enhancement, self-management and social problem solving.

**Duration:** Twenty-five sessions are divided among three processes: the intake process (three individual sessions); the intervention process (20 two-hour group sessions delivered between one and three times a week); and the closure process

(two individual sessions). The skills acquired during the program are reinforced in planned "booster" sessions, where the parole staff reviews the relapse plan and the use of the skills with the offender.

### Segregation pilot program

**Objectives:** The goal is to assist the offender in returning to the general inmate population at the earliest possible time, while providing rehabilitative program opportunities to offenders who have no short-term alternatives to segregation.

**Clientele:** All offenders who have been placed in segregation and are likely to reside in a segregation unit for a minimum of three weeks attend this program. It is not an alternative to the core correctional programs. If the opportunity of return or transfer to a less restrictive environment becomes available, the *Segregation Pilot Program* terminates.

**Research:** The need principle distinguishes between criminogenic and non-criminogenic needs. The former are dynamic risk factors, which if changed, reduce the likelihood of criminal conduct. In the specific application to the *Segregation Pilot Program*, the needs that are initially targeted are the criminal attitudes and behaviours that led to segregation. If segregation is prolonged (beyond 90 days), the focus expands to the criminal attitudes and behaviours that resulted in incarceration.

**Duration:** The *Segregation Pilot Program* is composed of two phases. The first phase consists of one to three sessions to gather information and motivate the offender. The second phase consists of 10 sessions on problem resolution. These sessions are typically offered to individuals or small groups, depending on the circumstances

and are not longer than two hours each. Small groups (maximum of four offenders) are preferred. Program interventions require a qualified program delivery officer and a mental health professional.

## 4. Substance Abuse Intervention

Research in North America shows that the vast majority of offenders have alcohol and other drug related problems. Approximately 80% of offenders under the supervision of the Correctional Service of Canada have some problems related to alcohol and drugs. It can be argued that no other single factor has as great an effect on criminal behaviour as substance abuse. Forty five percent of offenders are identified as having a link between their substance abuse and criminal behaviour. The relationship among substance abuse, past criminal behaviour and future risk increases dramatically with the severity of offenders' substance abuse problems.. CSC provides institutional and community based substance abuse intervention for more than 5,000 offenders annually. More than 3,000 offenders participate each year in the internationally accredited substance abuse programs provided by CSC. CSC has three key programs:

1. The *National Substance Abuse Program – High* is a high intensity intervention based in the institution.
2. The *National Substance Abuse Program – Moderate* is a moderate intensity intervention based in the community.
3. The *National Substance Abuse Program – Low* is a low intensity intervention offered in the community.

All intensity levels of the National Substance Abuse Programs (NSAP) are offered throughout CSC's five regions, in federal institutions, in most parole area offices across the country, and in several provincial facilities. In some regions, private sector partners, such as the John Howard Society, participate in program delivery. Federal, provincial and private agency staff has been trained by CSC regional trainers to deliver these substance abuse core programs. CSC remains responsible for the quality control.

### **Substance abuse programs**

**Objectives:** The overall goals of the programs are to reduce the risk of offenders relapsing into substance use and abuse and to reduce their risk of future criminal behaviour.

**Clientele:** Offenders are identified at the intake assessment via a computerized assessment instrument. NSAP – high is for offenders with substantial to severe substance abuse problems. NSAP – moderate targets offenders with intermediate alcohol and/or other drug use. The institutional substance abuse programs are designed to be provided as soon in the offenders' sentence as possible. Offenders participate in institutional maintenance and a pre-release booster program prior to community release. The NSAP – low targets only offenders with low substance abuse problems and available in the community for offenders on conditional release from federal custody. Offenders participate in community maintenance programming as required to maintain stability and enhance reintegration.

**Research:** Social learning theory provides a theoretical base for the programs. Substance abuse is a multifaceted problem that is a learned behaviour. It develops from modeling, reinforcement and cognitive mediation. Since substance abuse is viewed as a learned behaviour and not a disease, intervention focuses on

cognitive-behavioural skills training and relapse prevention.

An evaluation of substance abuse programs was completed in 1999. Participation in OSAPP effected a 31% reduction in new convictions compared to the control group. With OSAPP and Choices combined, a 42% reduction in new convictions was achieved. The Addictions Research Centre is conducting ongoing evaluation of the NSAP programs.

**Duration:** NSAP – high is 89 sessions in length that are two hours in duration. NSAP - moderate consists of 26 group sessions that are two hours in duration. The NSAP-low is 10 sessions in length. Offenders participate in maintenance as required. NSAP – high is delivered by two program facilitators to groups of 12 participants. The moderate, low and maintenance programs are delivered by one program facilitator to groups of 10 participants.

### 5. Sexual Offender Treatment Programs for Men

Sexual offender treatment programs focus on identifying the nature and pattern of offenders' behaviour and providing offenders with skills that will increase management of behaviour and reduce the likelihood of re-offending. A variety of programs are offered based on the level of risk and need the offender presents, including high, moderate, and low intensity programs, post-treatment follow-up programs, and specialized programs for women, Aboriginal, and special needs sexual offenders.

CSC defines a sexual offender as anyone who has:

- been convicted of a sex offence;

- been convicted of a sexually motivated offence; or
- admitted to a sex offence for which s/he has not been convicted.

Upon admission to a federal institution, a sex offender will undergo a specialized assessment that details the following information:

- history and development of sexual behaviour;
- sexual deviance;
- attitudes and cognitive distortions;
- social competence;
- medical history;
- psychopathology;
- prior assessment and treatment results;
- risk for future sexual offending;
- treatment needs.

#### National sexual offender programs

**Objectives:** CSC's National Sex Offender Treatment Programs are cognitive-behavioural interventions that are based on empirical research and best practices in the provision of services to sex offenders. They are based on the principles of social learning, adult learning, group processes, therapeutic rapport and alliance, motivational enhancement, risk assessment and management, targeting criminogenic needs, and skill development.

**Clientele:** Sexual offenders represent approximately 16% of the federal offender population. Risk and criminogenic needs of sexual offenders range from low to high. Moderate to high need levels may be based upon evidence that the offender has multiple criminogenic needs associated with sexual offending behaviour and vary across individual cases. In general, sexual offenders at higher risk to re-offend over the long-term include those with multiple previous convictions for sexual offences, convictions for other violent offences, those who have offended against male victims, and



offenders who do not successfully complete treatment. Lower risk offenders include: in general, incest offenders, offenders without previous convictions for sexual or other violent offences, those who have strong community support systems upon release, and those who successfully complete treatment. Risk to re-offend varies with individual cases and the probability of re-offending may be significantly reduced when offenders participate in treatment programs matched to their levels of risk and criminogenic needs.

**Research:** National moderate and low intensity programs with maintenance provisions were accredited by an international panel of sex offender experts in August 2000. Initial testing of these programs indicated significant and positive changes on indeterminate program targets and management of risk to re-offend. Evaluations of high intensity sex offender programs suggest a reduction in re-offending among treated sexual offenders as compared to offenders who did not participate in treatment. Program evaluation of all sexual offender programs is on-going.

**Duration:** The duration of low-intensity programs is between two and four months with three to five hours of group treatment per week. Moderate intensity programs require four to five months to complete with 10 to 14 hours of group intervention per week. High intensity programs are implemented over approximately nine months, with 15 to 20 hours of group treatment per week. In addition, individual treatment is conducted as required in all programs. Finally, all treated sexual offenders are provided the opportunity to participate in post-treatment maintenance programs as required, depending on their individual needs and ability to manage their risk to re-offend.

## 6. Aboriginal Offender Programs for Men

Aboriginal offenders are often participants in non-Aboriginal programs in the absence of Aboriginal options. This demands that all trainers are culturally competent to deliver programs to Aboriginal offenders. CSC recognizes that Aboriginal-specific programming is needed for this population and is committed to the development and delivery of accredited programs. *In Search of Your Warrior* for men, and *Spirit of a Warrior* for women, are examples of accredited alternatives to the non-Aboriginal violence prevention program options. Others are in the developmental stages for implementation in the near future.

### Cultural sensitivity

It is imperative for CSC to consider the importance of Canada's Aboriginal people when designing institutions and programs that are intended to reduce recidivism. Cultural differences and the fact that Aboriginal inmates often serve their sentences far from home can make their time in prison particularly stressful. Experience has shown that Aboriginal offenders respond more favorably to programs that are developed and delivered by Aboriginal people and communities. Therefore, CSC has taken a more holistic approach to the treatment of these offenders:

- involving Native liaison workers in the correctional plans of Aboriginal offenders and as offender–staff mediators;
- developing traditional cultural and spiritual programs;
- building Aboriginal healing lodges in lower-security institutions (including one for Aboriginal women) where offenders' needs are addressed through Aboriginal teachings, ceremonies, contact with Elders, and interaction with nature;

- developing substance abuse program utilizing Aboriginal expertise that are specific to the needs of Aboriginal peoples;
- supporting the development of an *Aboriginal Family Violence Program* that meet the unique needs of the Aboriginal offender;
- initiating *Pathways* healing units in institutions where Aboriginal offenders, who are committed to their healing through following their traditional spiritual ceremony, will be offered the opportunity to be entrenched in Aboriginal programs and culture;
- offering Aboriginal alternatives to the cognitive skills training for Aboriginal women that meet the needs of that population;
- adapting other existing CSC programs to meet the specific needs of Aboriginal offenders.

### Involvement of elders

Elders and native liaison workers act as a bridge for understanding the different Aboriginal cultures. As counselors and front-line staff, Elders and native liaison workers provide culturally appropriate programs and services, such as Aboriginal halfway houses. They also assist with release planning and referrals to Aboriginal halfway houses and other Aboriginal community resources. Elders conduct ceremonies, provide spiritual counseling and share cultural awareness.

### Facilities

CSC also operates a number of facilities for Aboriginal inmates, planned in full partnership with the Aboriginal community. Within these facilities almost all staff members, including wardens, are Aboriginal. At Okimaw Ochi Healing Lodge, the institutional head is not referred to as the “warden” but rather as the “Kikawinaw”. As well, a group of Aboriginal community members monitors the operation of these facilities and provides advice on their further development. The result is that the

facilities operate on the basis of Aboriginal values and principles as well as on the statutory mandate and the Mission of the CSC.

### Communities

Besides developing Aboriginal alternatives to core programs, CSC works with Aboriginal communities to develop and implement agreements as specified in the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*.

### Results

CSC completed a follow-up of the 412 Aboriginal offenders admitted to the Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge. Results revealed that of those completing programs, 6% had been returned to federal custody for committing a new offence, in contrast to the national federal recidivism rate of 11% in 1997–98. This means that the Aboriginal healing lodges are having a positive impact.

## 7. Programs for Women Offenders

Section 77 of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* mandates CSC to provide programs designed to address the particular needs of women offenders and to regularly consult with appropriate individuals and groups concerning women offender programs. *The Correctional Program Strategy for Women Offenders* is a holistic, women-centered framework that provides consistency for all programming in the regional women’s institutions. “Women-centered” means that programs reflect the social realities of women and respond to their specific needs. Though research is scarce in terms of evaluating program effectiveness for women, the literature provides insight on issues that are relevant for women who are in conflict with the law.

### Women offender substance abuse program

Research indicates that women have a different range of problems related to their use of substances than do men offenders. Eating disorders, major affective mood disorders (e.g. depression) and a history of abuse, possibly related to post-traumatic stress disorder, are highly prevalent in women with substance abuse disorders.

Given that experts suggest that programming is most effective when it includes all aspects of the environment, a key component of the *Women Offender Substance Abuse Program (WOSAP)* is community building. WOSAP provides a systemic approach to substance abuse. The interdependency of its different programming components creates momentum beyond structure and content to living and experiencing change, thus creating a supportive environment for remaining drug and alcohol free. Community building efforts reinforce program goals by fostering a positive institutional culture. As a community building strategy, the implementation of Intensive Support Units in the women's institutions complements programming by offering supportive housing to those women who are committed to remaining alcohol and drug free. Additional community building strategies include peer support, self-help groups, and community forums.

### Programs for women offenders who are survivors of abuse and trauma

Surveys of women offenders in Canada indicate that the majority of offenders are survivors of abuse and trauma. Abuse is found to be more widespread amongst Aboriginal women.

Though surviving abuse and trauma has not been linked directly to criminal activity, services for survivors are an important component of treatment for women offenders. Treatment

readiness for correctional programming targeting criminal behaviour is increased when women offenders have access to counselling to help them deal with issues of trauma. Each of the women's institutions has ongoing contracts with recognized experts in the community to offer group and individual counselling for survivors of abuse and trauma.

### Reasoning and rehabilitation program for women offenders

The literature suggests that deficits in the area of living skills are common among women in conflict with the law. Therefore, the *Reasoning and Rehabilitation Program* (formerly referred to as the "Cognitive Skills Training Program") is offered at the women's institutions.

The *Reasoning and Rehabilitation Program* consists of 38 sessions that focus on the development of interpersonal reasoning skills for effective life management. The program targets the following specifically identified cognitive deficit areas:

- Self-regulation/self-management: impulsivity;
- Self-regulation/self-management: poor emotions management;
- Egocentrism and social perspective taking;
- Assertiveness and social interaction;
- Criminal attitudes and attributions;
- Critical reasoning; and
- Rigid cognitive style.

### Education / literacy / continuous learning programs for women offenders

Education programs serve to assist women offenders to become productive members of society. Each of the regional facilities is required to provide offenders with provincially accredited or certified programs which meet their identified education needs and help them to reintegrate into the community as law-abiding citizens. Women

are actively encouraged to complete a grade 10 level of education, and acquisition of this level is a pre-requisite for participation in institutional programs.

A literacy program is also offered at each of the regional facilities (referred to as *Keys to Family Literacy Program*). This program provides a creative and flexible approach to literacy while facilitating learning. Its goals are to expand literacy skills, link literacy skills with parenting skills, and encourage positive familial attitudes and behaviours.

### Employment and vocational programs for women offenders

Employment is an important need that can assist offenders in their efforts to reintegrate into the community as law-abiding citizens. As such, CSC is responsible for ensuring that women offenders become job ready. Quite simply, this means that, while incarcerated, women offenders need to be given the opportunity to develop employability skills, gain certified work experience, and understand and experience the performance expectations of a private sector employer in terms of pace of work, quality of work, hours of work, etc.

Vocational programs are also offered to women offenders. These programs assist women to acquire marketable work skills that prepare them to participate in CORCAN work programs (CORCAN is a recognized correctional employment program in Canada) or in other institutional / community work programs. Vocational programs for women offenders must provide an adequate quantity and quality of work training that is relevant to the job market.

For additional information about CSC's Employment Programs, see Section 9.

**Sexual offender therapy for women offenders**  
Sexual offender therapy is available for the very small proportion of women who sexually offend. This intervention, offered in each of the regional women's facilities and in the community, is delivered on a one-to-one basis.

The *Sexual Offender Therapy Program* is comprised of five modules, including: self-management; deviant arousal; cognitive distortions; intimacy, relationships and social functioning; empathy and victim awareness. The primary goals of treatment for women who sexually offend are to learn to identify and deal with the factors that influenced their offences, thereby reducing their recidivism risk. A *Protocol for the Assessment and Treatment of Women who Sexually Offend* has been implemented to ensure consistency in the assessment and treatment of this small group of women.

### Aboriginal-specific programs and services for women offenders

Given the high representation of First Nations and Aboriginal women incarcerated in Canada, and given the recommendations contained within *Creating Choices* (the Task Force Report on Federally Sentenced Women [1990]), CSC opened the Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge for women offenders in 1995. This Aboriginal healing lodge was the first institution of its kind, and was developed with and for First Nations communities. The majority of their staff, including the Kikawinaw (meaning “director” of the institution or “our mother” in Cree) is of Aboriginal descent. Its operational philosophy is based on Aboriginal teachings, spirituality, and traditions. The role of the Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge is to help women to:

- restore their pride and dignity as women and mothers;
- re-establish their sense of worth, dignity and hope;

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- rebuild their families and their communities;
- build bridges between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies; and
- promote the healing of the Earth and all her creatures.

An on-site Elder is present at all times, and each day begins with a *Talking Circle* in the Spiritual Lodge. Ceremonies, feasts and other traditions are incorporated into the overall programming of the lodge.

Not all Aboriginal women are incarcerated at the Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge. Thus, CSC ensures that Aboriginal-specific programs and services, including Elders and Native Liaison Officers, are available at each of the regional facilities. These programs and services help meet the spiritual needs of Aboriginal women.

### Circles of Change Program

The *Circles of Change Program* is a unique, intensive, gender specific program that addresses the criminogenic needs of Aboriginal women offenders. This program includes three rehabilitative strategies: relational, cognitive-behavioural, and solution-focused. The modules include: the process of change; increasing the knowledge of Canadian Aboriginal culture; communication styles; self-esteem and self-care issues; problem solving skills; woman's role in her family of origin; healthy and unhealthy relationships; and social injustice.

### Family Life Improvement Program

The *Family Life Improvement Program* is a six-week full-day program that is designed to give women offenders practice in positive living skills and spiritual awareness. It offers exercises that promote a balanced approach to dealing with anger, violence, grief, jealousy, family relationships, and holistic living. This program is based on the belief that Aboriginal culture and traditions can provide a catalyst for the healing of

Aboriginal peoples. The program prepares the participants for more in-depth treatment with psychologists, Elders, and for involvement in other programming activities. It also offers participants alternatives for dealing with negative emotions and situations that may arise in their lives. The *Family Life Improvement Program* is a pre-requisite to the *Spirit of a Warrior Program*. The program is similar to the *Reasoning and Rehabilitation Program* offered to non-Aboriginal women.

### Spirit of a Warrior Program

The *Spirit of a Warrior Program* was specifically designed to address the needs of Aboriginal women offenders. It explicitly targets violent behaviour. The program is divided into four sections: introduction; childhood; adolescence; and adulthood/alternatives to violence. *Spirit of a Warrior* consists of an in-depth intervention that is intended to reduce the risk to re-offend with violence, reduce risk to relapse, improve family relations, improve ability to communicate with others, improve coping skills, and adapt Aboriginal culture and spirituality into all aspects of behaviour and everyday life.

### Mother-Child Program

The *Mother-Child Program* is available for women classified as a minimum or medium security risk. The objective is to promote stability and continuity for the child by encouraging the relationship with his/her mother. Mothers in this program are allowed to keep their newborns and/or pre-school aged children with them in the institution *if it is in the best interest of the child*. An extensive evaluation is done in conjunction with social service providers to ensure that the best interests of the child — including his/her physical, emotional and spiritual well being — are taken into consideration when making all decisions relating to the inmate's and the child's participation in the program.

### Mental health services and programs for women offenders

The *Mental Health Strategy for Women Offenders* was first developed in 1997; however it was revised in 2002 to reflect recent changes and developments in relation to mental health services for women offenders. These include the closure of the Prison for Women, the expansion of mental health programs and services, and the implementation of the Intensive Intervention Strategy (IIS). The IIS is aimed at better

addressing the needs and risks of women classified as maximum security and women classified as minimum or medium security with cognitive deficits and/or mental health needs.

The *Mental Health Strategy for Women Offenders* provides a framework for the development of mental health services for all women offenders. The Strategy is similar to that developed for men offenders; however, it acknowledges the mental health needs of women offenders in particular. It outlines the mental health issues and problems faced by women offenders and the treatment, intervention, and programs required to address these issues.

The Strategy provides a continuum of mental health care services to women, both during their incarceration and upon release into the community, including: assessment, crisis intervention, group and individual counseling, and follow-up.

**Structured Living Environment Houses** have been operational at each of the regional women's facilities since 2001. These houses have 24-hour staff supervision, and are designed to provide a treatment option for minimum and medium security women with cognitive limitations or significant mental health concerns requiring more intensive supervision.

**Secure Units** opened in each of the women's facilities in 2003. These units address the high risk and high needs posed by a small proportion of women offenders. The Secure Units help these women manage their behavioural problems through appropriate interventions in a structured and secure setting. Women remain in the Secure Units until they demonstrate they can be safely managed at a lower security classification. While the Secure Units are physically separate from the

remainder of the facility, they are located within its existing perimeter.

Staff in the Structured Living Environment (SLE) Houses and the Secure Units is specially trained in mental health intervention. An inter-disciplinary team approach, combining elements of good correctional practice, intensive intervention, dynamic security, appropriate programming, and mental health services is utilized in the SLE Houses and Secure Units.

Two primary modes of therapeutic intervention are provided to women offenders in the Structured Living Environment Houses and the Secure Units.

**Psychosocial Rehabilitation (PSR)** addresses the needs of cognitively low-functioning women and women with living skills deficits. PSR helps these individuals regain control over their lives and formulate goals and plans to increase the quality of their lives. PSR is based on ongoing, empirical evaluation of program procedures and components.

**Dialectical Behaviour Training (DBT)** addresses the needs of women with serious emotional deregulation, including characteristics of borderline personality disorder. DBT addresses problematic behaviour by targeting skill development to deal with deregulation of emotions, relationships, cognitions and behaviours. DBT program modules also focus on mindfulness, interpersonal effectiveness, and distress tolerance.

The **Intensive Healing Program** at the Regional Psychiatric Centre in Saskatoon is an intensive program delivered in a secure hospital environment. Women who have been diagnosed with an Axis I disorder (e.g., schizophrenia) as well as those whose behaviours are associated

with borderline personality disorders and/or other problems are treated at the Centre on a voluntary basis. Behaviours associated with borderline personality disorders include persistent and severe self-injury, depression, severe anxiety, suicidal tendencies, identity disturbance, dissociation, difficulty controlling anger, and severe substance abuse.

### Other programs and services for women offenders

A number of other programs and services are offered at each regional facility for women. Multicultural programs, recreation and leisure programs, and peer support team programs are but a few examples. Programs and services that exist in one facility are often transferred and tailored to meet the needs of women offenders at another.

## 8. Mental Health Treatment

Although there is an assumption that mental disorders lead to violence or criminality, research has shown that this relationship is weak. Roughly 90% of all individuals with a major mental disorder are not violent. Many federal offenders suffer from mental disorders such as schizophrenia, severe depression and substance abuse related disorders. To help meet the mental health needs of men offenders, CSC has one mental health treatment or psychiatric centre in each of its five regions. Specialized units exist in each of the women's facilities to address the mental health needs of women offenders. (*Refer to previous paragraphs (7): Programs for Women Offenders, Mental Health Services and Programs.*)

CSC's primary goal is to rehabilitate offenders successfully, however offenders with mental disorders have specific needs. Correctional programs target criminogenic factors, such as

criminal associations, antisocial attitudes and criminal behaviour. Mental health treatment, on the other hand, assists offenders to manage their conditions and restore their ability to function in order to enhance their quality of life.

Psychiatric or psychological treatment may reduce recidivism by helping offenders address the factors that led to their offence(s). Medication maintenance, community support, professional assistance and appropriate housing are all factors that can assist an offender who has a mental disorder live successfully in the community and prevent recidivism.

CSC policy and practice stipulate that, upon admission to a facility, each inmate must undergo a mental health assessment. Any further assessment, procedures and treatment provided by CSC can only be performed with the inmate's consent (except in special circumstances where the offender has been judged incompetent or presents a significant risk to harm him or herself or others). An interdisciplinary team, composed of a psychologist, nurse, case management officer, psychiatrist (when necessary) and ad hoc members, functions as a coordinating body for inmates in need of mental health services. The functions of the inter-disciplinary team include:

- identifying needs and service requirements
- prioritizing the dispensing of mental health services
- monitoring and documenting the clinical progress of individual inmates on a monthly basis
- providing treatment for those suffering from acute, sub-acute or chronic mental disorders

## 9. Employment Programs

Employment programs within the federal correctional system help offenders develop the skills they need to find a job upon release, thus

promoting their safe reintegration into society. The maximum daily amount that an inmate can earn is \$6.90 for performance on the job and participation in programs. Deductions, to a maximum of \$25 per week, are made from income earned by offenders for room and board. These deductions are taken from income of incarcerated offenders, and from those who are working in the community while living in a CSC facility.

Being gainfully employed gives the offender a sense of purpose. In addition, inmate employment benefits the institution. Employing offenders in day-to-day operations helps lower the costs of incarceration. As well, the sale of goods and services provided by employed inmates represents a source of revenue.

### CORCAN

Many employment opportunities come from CORCAN, a special operating agency of CSC. CORCAN's mandate to provide inmates with employment and employability skills training in a work environment that strives to achieve private sector standards of productivity and quality. CORCAN also supports programs and services that facilitate the reintegration of offenders in the community following their release. The agency ensures its activities do not significantly impact the existing marketplace or private sector competitors. Close to 4,000 offenders participate in CORCAN operations for varying lengths of time each year, providing the equivalent of approximately 2,000 full time jobs. CORCAN has five business lines: agribusiness, construction (within correctional facilities), manufacturing (furniture, specialty items), textiles (inmate clothing), and services (laundry, printing).



### ***Certification***

Through work assignments and vocational training opportunities, offenders are encouraged to obtain short term trade-related third-party certification—a factor which enhances their chances of finding a job once they leave prison. In 2004- 2005 approximately 6000 vocational certificates were earned by offenders in areas such as WHMIS, forklift operation, safe food handling and construction safety

### ***Community Programs***

To enhance the ability of offenders to find and keep work once they are in the community, CORCAN operates 34 employment centres where offenders can obtain help preparing for and finding a job. Some centres are operated through arrangements with local community-based service delivery agencies recognized for their knowledge of offenders' needs, such as the Elizabeth Fry Society, the John Howard Society, the St Leonard's Society and the private sector. In 2004-2005 close to 2,000 offenders were placed in jobs in the community through these employment centres in construction, general labour, hospitality, janitorial services manufacturing and food and beverage services.

### ***Revenue Generation***

CORCAN generates sales revenues in the \$50 million range each year through sales of its products and services mainly to the public sector (governments, universities, not-for-profit). Prices charged reflect current market conditions. Surpluses, if any, are used to augment employability skills training and to support a sustainable capital investment strategy.

### ***Challenges***

CORCAN faces a number of challenges-- chief among them ensuring that it has on-going access to a stable market in the public sector so that it is in a position to provide a steady supply of

employment training opportunities for offenders in the CORCAN production shops. The changing profile of the offender population and the decreasing numbers of offenders at minimum institutions pose another set of challenges. Other challenges stem from the constraints on the procurement and human resources fronts due to the requirement to operate within the regulatory environment of the federal government while at the same time remaining competitive with other private sector suppliers.

## **10. Ethnocultural Programs**

### **The need for programs**

The increasing diversity of Canada's population is reflected in the correctional system and presents a challenge for CSC in terms of providing culturally appropriate programs and services, along with sensitivity training for offenders and staff. Ethnocultural offenders account for almost 14% of the federal offender population and their numbers are projected to increase. Like Aboriginal Canadians, African-Canadian inmates are over-represented in the federal correctional system. In the Pacific region, Asian offenders account for almost 44% of the ethnocultural population. Much more needs to be done to meet their special needs and to address the factors that underlie their criminal behaviour.

### **National ethnocultural programs strategy**

Because of the growing diversity of the inmate population and the management and reintegration challenges it poses, CSC has implemented an Ethnocultural Offender Program Management Strategy that consists of the following elements:

- a Commissioner's Directive on ethnocultural programs;
- identifying the reintegration needs of each ethnocultural group;

- establishing ethnocultural liaison services (including the hiring of ethnocultural liaison officers) and national/regional ethnocultural advisory committees, to serve as a bridge between offenders and case management personnel;
- offering religious services for the various groups;
- developing affirmation programs, including the COACH (Creating Opportunities for African-Canadian Heroes) programs;
- offering positive and motivational reinforcement programs;
- establishing programming for foreign nationals, including developing supports for deportable offenders;
- devising training programs, cultural awareness activities and a multiculturalism award for CSC staff;
- developing ethnocultural correctional programs and services for African-Canadian and Asian-Canadian women offenders.

### Existing policies and programs

Since 1994, CSC has had a policy concerning the determination of the needs and cultural characteristics of ethnic minority offenders. The policy stipulates that racial harassment and discriminatory behaviour will not be tolerated. Some ethnocultural programs are already in place:

**Black Inmates and Friends Assembly:** conducts intake assessments, assists with pre-parole, discharge planning, group counseling, and reintegration support.

**Religious customs:** respect for traditional dress, religious diets, different days of worship and spiritual practices.

**Linguistic services:** access to interpreters for offenders who have difficulty speaking English or

French.

**Cross-cultural awareness activities:** seminars, conferences, cultural festivals, the creation of a multicultural network, and visits to ethnic communities are some of the activities that promote staff and offender awareness of different cultural practices and beliefs.

The major efforts of CSC currently focus on promoting the meaningful participation of ethnocultural offenders in CSC core programs, while adapting this so that diverse cultural or ethnic values, beliefs, learning styles and communication methods are respected so that these offenders derive the maximum benefit from the programs.

## 11. LifeLine

LifeLine is a program designed for the men and women offenders serving life and long sentences in federal penitentiaries or in the community. It was formed through a partnership between CSC, the National Parole Board and community-based sponsoring agencies. Through this program, paroled lifers and offenders serving a long sentence who have been successfully living in the community for at least five years offer support to other lifers throughout their sentence. The help is likely to be long-term, since paroled lifers will always be under supervision. LifeLine's mission is to help offenders make a successful, supervised, gradual reintegration into the community. LifeLine consists of three components:

**In-Reach** brings paroled lifers back into institutions to motivate and help other lifers make their time in prison productive.

**Community resources** assist lifers to reintegrate into the community.

**Public education** achieved by In-Reach workers meeting with interested groups and individuals, helps create community support. In addition, In-Reach workers carry out preventive work, such as trying to deter youth from becoming involved in crime or drugs, assisting in special education initiatives, and serving as positive role models.

There are In-Reach workers in each of the five regions across Canada, and the program is being expanded due to its success. In August 1995, the American Correctional Association recognized LifeLine as a program of excellence.

Furthermore in October 2002, LifeLine received the “*Offender Management/Treatment and Reintegration*” Award from the International Corrections and Prisons Association for the advancement of professional corrections.

### Facts about lifers

- There are some 4,300 offenders serving a life sentence in Canada. About one-third are on lifetime parole supervision in the community.
- Lifers make up about 21% of the federal offender population.
- The majority of lifers (75%) had never been in a penitentiary before receiving their life sentence, and, in many cases, homicide is the first crime they committed.
- Lifers are the least likely of all offenders to repeat their offence — 98.4% never do.
- Unlike other offenders, lifers do not have a fixed release date. They also face much longer sentences — a minimum of 12 years, compared to the average sentence of 3 to 4 years.

### Community involvement

There are many community-based agencies that sponsor In-Reach workers, such as the St. Leonard Society, the John Howard Society, the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, Community Justice Ministries in Alberta and LINC (Long Term Offenders in the Community) in British Columbia. St. Leonard House in Windsor, Ontario, is the only facility in Canada with a dedicated residential program for lifers released on parole. Although small, it allows lifers to stay much longer than most halfway houses, recognizing that some lifers and offenders serving a long sentence need a more gradual, phased re-entry into the community after serving so many years behind bars.